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Dates to Remember:

August 1 – Reconstitution
Deadline for FY 2007

August 1 – COC Nomination
forms must be returned to county
office by close of business

August 3 – Signature deadline on
2007 Direct and Counter-cyclical
Program (DCP)

August 4 - September 28 – DCP
late filed fee of \$100 will be
assessed

September 3 – Holiday, Office
closed

September 28 – Final date for late
filed 2007 DCP contracts

October 2 & 3 – Women Stepping
Forward for Agriculture
Symposium, Dillon

November 2 – COC ballots will be
mailed to eligible voters

December 3 – Final date to return
voted COC ballots to FSA office



Wheatland County

August 2007

DCP Signature Deadline is September 28, 2007

Producers enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) have until September 28th to provide all contract signatures for share acres and late-filed fees. Late-filed fees start after August 3rd.

NOTE: A number of questions have been received regarding the restoration of DCP base acreage from CRP contracts expiring on September 30, 2007. Currently, the 2002 Farm Bill provides for restoration of lost base acres when a CRP contract expires. That provision ends September 30, 2007 with the expiration of the 2002 Farm Bill. When a new Farm Bill is passed by Congress, FSA will provide details as they become available.

Fire Management on CRP

With the hot, dry weather Montana faces during July and August, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract holders have the opportunity to provide fire protection on their CRP acres.

Firebreaks can either be a strip of bare land or a vegetative cover that retards fire. Grazing is not allowed as an option to maintain firebreaks. Bare ground firebreaks shall be only allowed in high risk areas such as transportation corridors, rural communities, and adjacent farmsteads. Bare ground strips may serve as sites for the establishment of weeds. As required for the vegetative cover, weeds and erosion must be controlled on bare ground strips. Lack of weed control measure could result in noncompliance of CRP provisions and assessment of payment reduction or termination of the affected acreage. It is the responsibility of the CRP contract holder to maintain the firebreaks.

CRP contract holders must acquire a modification to their current CRP contract that includes fire management. Contact the office for required fire management specifications.

2007 County Committee Election Dates

August 1	COC nomination forms must be returned to county office by close of business
November 2	Ballots mailed to eligible voters
December 3	Final date to return voted ballots to FSA office

No Final 2006 Counter-cyclical Payments for Wheat, Barley and Oats

FSA will not issue final 2006-crop counter-cyclical payments to farmers enrolled in the Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program (DCP) for wheat, barley and oats. The decision was made due to the fact that prices for these commodities have averaged well above levels that trigger counter-cyclical payments.

Counter-cyclical payments are made at the end of an eligible crop's 12-month marketing year. The 2002 Farm Bill provides for the availability of two partial counter-cyclical payments. USDA did not issue a first or second partial payment for the 2006 crop of wheat, barley or oats due to strong markets.

The counter-cyclical payment rate is the amount by which the "target price" of each commodity, specified by the 2002 Farm Bill, exceeds its effective price. The effective price equals the direct payment rate plus the higher of either: 1) the national average market price received by producers during the marketing year; or 2) the national average loan rate for the commodity.

For each commodity, the counter-cyclical payment for each crop year equals 85 percent of the farm's base acreage times the farm's counter-cyclical payment yield times the counter-cyclical payment rate.

Measurement Service Charges

On farm measurement is charged at:

- Basic Farm Fee of \$30.00
- Plus an hourly rate of \$16.00 for the first hour and \$8.00 of each additional half hour after the first hour. The minimum is one hour.

The hourly rate includes the time to travel from the FSA Office to the farm, complete the measurement service and return to the office.

An "initial fee" is required at the time the measurement service is requested and the fee must be collected before the measurement service is performed. The initial fee is the basic rate plus the hourly minimum. Once the service has been completed the actual cost will be calculated.

In-office measurements are charged at :

- A basic farm rate of \$15.00 plus a 30-minute minimum rate of \$8.00

Questions concerning Measurement service –Call the Office.

Beginning, Small and Limited Resource Farmers: Do You Require Financial Assistance to Fund Conservation Program Initiatives?

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FSA have worked cooperatively to make USDA programs more available and readily accessible to beginning, small, and limited resource producers.

As many producers move from the initial contract development of especially the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), many face the inability to acquire the initial capital investment for their cost-share portion needed for contract implementation. Even with increased cost-share rates, the challenge of providing the up-front share may present problems to full contract implementation.

USDA provides some options. FSA has several loan programs available that may help with the upfront costs associated with program implementation. Use of FSA loan programs, in conjunction with conservation programs, has the potential to improve the effectiveness of both NRCS and FSA programs. FSA loans can be used for various farm purposes such as farm improvements, which would cover conservation projects and practices, and payment of costs associated with land and water development for conservation use purposes. Loan funds may be used to finance the producer's share of the project cost, and also as interim financing on the Federal cost-share portion paid upon completion of the conservation program project.

Contact the FSA or NRCS office for options available and further information on how FSA loans can assist with completing conservation projects.

Beneficial Interest

For a producer to have Beneficial Interest in a commodity, the producer must have had ownership and control of the commodity at the time the producer requests a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP); or for Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL's), from the time of planting through the maturity of the loan or the date of repayment, whichever is earlier.

Beneficial interest is retained in the commodity if all of the following remain with the producer:

- Control of the commodity, the commodity must be within their possession;
- Risk of loss;
- Title to the commodity.

For LDP's, beneficial interest must be retained in the commodity from the time of planting through the date form CCC-633EZ, page 1 is filed.

For loans, beneficial interest must be retained in the commodity from the time of planting through the date the loan is redeemed or the crop is sold.

Once beneficial interest in the commodity is lost, the commodity remains ineligible for a loan or an LDP even if the producer regains control, risk of loss, and title.

**Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium**

The Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium will be held October 2 & 3, 2007 at the Beaverhead Golf Course, Highway 41 North in Dillon. Early registration is \$50 due by September 20. The Symposium is sponsored by the State FAC, MT Agri-Women, MT Farm Bureau Women, WIFE and the MT Cattlewomen. The symposium provides a platform for women involved in the promotion of Montana's agriculture to learn of issues affecting rural agricultural communities, promote leadership development, and further support women's leadership roles.

An agenda including the registration form is available at the FSA office or by logging into the Montana FSA homepage at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

New Features on the Web

USDA provides their customers an opportunity to do business electronically 24 hours a day seven days a week over the Internet.

With a Level 2 access, USDA customers may receive their 1099-G form, review any collections or debts they may have with USDA and also review an itemized listing of their USDA payments.

Receiving a Level 2 account is a simple process. By entering your name, address and answering a few questions, customers may have access to the above mentioned items.

In addition to receiving payment information, USDA customers may also send forms from the comfort of their home and sign up for programs without visiting a USDA service Center.

Complete step-by-step instructions for obtaining a Level 2 access, retrieving payment information, submitting forms and signing up for certain programs is available by logging on to the Montana FSA Internet site at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

Wheatland County FSA

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Important Dates to Remember

August 1 – COC nomination forms must be submitted to county office
August 3 – Signature deadline on 2007 DCP
September 3 – Office Closed, Labor Day
September 28 - DCP late-filed deadline
October 2 & 3 – Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium
November 2 – COC ballots mailed to voters
December 3 – COC ballots returned to office

Expanding Emergency Haying and Grazing Eligibility Area

CRP contract holders within a 210 mile radius of Glacier County may offer their CRP acreage to Glacier County livestock producers for haying or grazing purposes.

Livestock producers must certify they are a livestock producer in an eligible county approved for emergency haying and grazing and they are requesting emergency haying and grazing of CRP acreage from a CRP contract holder within the expanded area willing to lease the haying or grazing rights.

For all land enrolled in CRP that has been approved for emergency haying and grazing, a payment reduction shall be assessed based on the number of acres actually hayed or grazed times the CRP annual rental rate times 10 percent.

CRP participants who are willing to lease the haying or grazing privilege to a livestock producer located in a county approved for emergency haying or grazing on CRP acreage should contact the local FSA office.

**Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in FSA programs should contact Kathryn Hiner, P.O. Box 669, Harlowton MT 59036
phone (406) 632-5622 or; e-mail: kathy.hiner@mt.usda.gov**